

R016-0405

10 **A RESOLUTION REGARDING SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

20 **WHEREAS:** A debate has persisted in the United States to determine the appropriate content of
30 sexuality education curricula in public schools; and,

40 **WHEREAS:** State and local Boards of Education have debated over the inclusion of information on
50 contraception and sexually transmitted diseases in elementary, middle, and high school
60 sexual education curricula; and,

70 **WHEREAS:** Since 1996, our federal government has spent \$700 million of taxpayers' money on
80 abstinence-only education, and the annual expenditures are growing exponentially; and,

90 **WHEREAS:** Today, in order to get federal funding for sexuality education, schools must teach that
100 having *no* sex is the *only* option for people of any age who aren't married; and,

110 **WHEREAS:** While 58 percent of all schools in the United States teach abstinence-only, a full 86
120 percent of the public school districts that teach sexuality education require that abstinence
130 be promoted, and of those more than one third require abstinence to be taught as the only
140 option for unmarried people, and either prohibit any mention of contraceptives or limit
150 discussion to their ineffectiveness; and,

160 **WHEREAS:** In the South, where teen pregnancy rates are significantly higher than in the rest of the
170 country, abstinence-only classes are taught in more than half of the schools; and,

180 **WHEREAS:** Students in these programs are not getting the real information and skills they need to
190 develop a healthy understanding of their sexuality, make responsible decisions, and
200 protect themselves from pregnancy and sometimes life-threatening sexually transmitted
210 diseases; and,

220 **WHEREAS:** The United States is the only country in the world that requires government-funded
230 sexuality education programs to limit their teachings to abstinence, and other
240 industrialized countries teach comprehensive sex education, and they have far lower rates
250 of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections; and,

260 **WHEREAS:** Abstinence-only education does not teach many things to young people, but it should,
270 like that sexuality is a natural, normal, healthy part of life, does not teach responsible
280 decision-making skills about relationships, the facts about human growth and
290 development, positive messages about sexuality and sexual behavior, including the
300 benefits of abstinence; and,

310 **WHEREAS:** Abstinence-only education also does not teach that consistent use of contraception can
320 greatly reduce a couple's risk for unintended pregnancy, does not teach accurate, factual
330 information on abortion, masturbation, and sexual orientation, does not teach factual
340 information about sexually transmitted infections, does not teach how to use condoms,
350 and why—because they can significantly reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy, HIV,
360 and other sexually transmitted infections; and,

370 **WHEREAS:** Abstinence-only education also does not teach interpersonal skills and relationships, the
380 full range of options for an unintended pregnancy, which include carrying the pregnancy
390 to term and raising the baby or placing the baby up for adoption, as well as ending the
400 pregnancy with an abortion, and does not provide an opportunity to explore family,
410 community, and religious values related to sexuality; and,

420 **WHEREAS:** In a country where six in ten women and seven in ten men have had sexual intercourse by

430 their eighteenth birthday, most people don't get married until they're twenty-five, and the
440 rate of unintended pregnancy is one of the highest in the Western world, abstinence-only
450 programs are pathologically inadequate; and,

460 **WHEREAS:** In October 2002, reviewing all the available data on abstinence-only programs for a
470 report for the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy—a nonprofit, nonpartisan
480 organization—researcher Douglas Kirby, Ph.D., found, “There do not currently exist any
490 abstinence-only programs with strong evidence that they either delay sex or reduce teen
500 pregnancy.”; and,

510 **WHEREAS:** Young people who've had abstinence education are less likely to use condoms or other
520 contraceptives when they do have sex than those who've had real sex education; and,

530 **WHEREAS:** More than three-quarters of parents surveyed say that sexuality education should discuss,
540 along with abstinence, condom use and other forms of birth control; abortion; sexual
550 orientation; and psychological issues associated with having sex, ninety-three percent of
560 adults support sexuality education in high school, and 84 percent in junior high school,
570 and sixty-six percent of American voters favor teaching age-appropriate sexuality
580 education in elementary schools; and,

590 **WHEREAS:** Fifty-four percent of adults believe that eliminating sexuality education in schools would
600 lead to more teenage pregnancies, and only 1 to 5 percent of parents remove their
610 children from classes that provide comprehensive sexual information; and,

620 **WHEREAS:** Surveys of more than four thousand students, parents, teachers, and principals show that
630 parents want schools to “go further” than they currently do on the topics of reproduction,
640 HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, and to “address issues often labeled
650 controversial, like abortion and sexual orientation, as well as teach communication and
660 coping skills”; and,

670 **WHEREAS:** A majority of parents and teachers agree that schools should dedicate more time to sex
680 education—half a semester or more; and,

690 **WHEREAS:** Of topics included in sex education curriculum, 85 percent of parents want students to
700 learn how to use condoms; 84 percent, how to use other forms of birth control; 88
710 percent, how to talk about birth control with sexual partners; 94 percent, how to cope
720 with pressure to have sex; 94 percent, the emotional consequences of becoming sexually
730 active; 79 percent, abortion; 76 percent, sexual orientation; and 74 percent say
740 controversial issues should be presented in a “balanced” way that describes society's
750 diversity of views and values; and,

760 **WHEREAS:** Not only parents, but many prominent health organizations, including the American
770 Medical Society, the Institute of Medicine, the Society for Adolescent Medicine, the
780 American Academy of Pediatrics, and over one hundred other medical and professional
790 organizations are on record supporting comprehensive sexuality education programs; and,

800 **WHEREAS:** A wide variety of religious organizations support real sex education, including the
810 American Jewish Congress, the National Council of Churches of Christ, and the
820 Unitarian Universalist Association; and,

830 **WHEREAS:** Almost eight in ten conservative Christians support sexuality education in high school,
840 and seven in ten support it in junior high; and,

850 **WHEREAS:** Dr. C. Everett Koop, Surgeon General under President Reagan, said, “There is no doubt
860 that we need sex education in public schools and that it should include information on
870 heterosexual and homosexual relationships... starting at the lowest grade possible.”; and,

880 **WHEREAS:** Dr. Antonia Novell, Surgeon General under President George H.W. Bush, in a Surgeon
890 General’s Report to the American Public on HIV Infection and AIDS, stressed the need
900 for “scientific, dependable information about HIV and AIDS”; and,

910 **WHEREAS:** Dr. David Satcher, Surgeon General under President Clinton, said, “We face a serious
920 public health challenge regarding the sexual health of our nation... This is a call to
930 action. We cannot remain complacent. Doing nothing is unacceptable.”; and,

940 **WHEREAS:** Dr. Joycelyn Elders, another Surgeon General under President Clinton, said,
950 “Comprehensive health education should be taught to all children, starting in
960 kindergarten and continuing through high school.”; and,

970 **WHEREAS:** Dr. Richard Carmona, Surgeon General under President George W. Bush, stated that sex
980 education programs should include discussion of condoms and other forms of birth
990 control, and said, “As part of comprehensive education, we should be talking about all of
1000 the issues.”; and,

1010 **WHEREAS:** In the 1996 Welfare Law, U.S. Society Security Act, Section 510(b)(2), federally funded
1020 abstinence-only education is mandated to have, as its exclusive purpose, teaching the
1030 social, psychological, and health gains to be realized by abstaining from sexual activity,
1040 teaches that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the
1050 expected standard of human sexual activity, and that it teaches that sexual activity outside
1060 of the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects;
1070 and,

1080 **WHEREAS:** The kinds of materials that are used to teach students abstinence to comply with the
1090 standards in the U.S. Society Security Act, Section 510(b)(2) includes “*No Second*
1100 *Chance*,” an abstinence only sex education video that tells students “What if you want to
1110 have sex before I get married?... Well, I guess you just have to be prepared to die. And
1120 you’ll probably take your spouse and one or more of your children with you.”; and,

1130 **WHEREAS:** These materials also include “Sex Respect,” a student workbook, which states “There is
1140 no way to have premarital sex without hurting someone,” and “FACTS,” and middle-
1150 school teacher’s guide, states, “Conception, also known as fertilization, occurs when one
1160 sperm unites with one egg in the upper third of the fallopian tube. This is when life
1170 begins... even though he or she was only the size and appearance of a pencil dot, the
1180 baby was a separate, genetically unique individual.”; and,

1190 **WHEREAS:** In “*Facing Reality, A Parent/Teacher Guide*”, its curriculum states that the following
1200 should be cited to students as the harmful consequences of premarital sex: “Pregnancy,
1210 fear of pregnancy, AIDS, guilt, herpes, disappointing parents, Chlamydia, inability to
1220 concentrate on school, syphilis, embarrassment, abortion, shotgun wedding, gonorrhea,
1230 selfishness, pelvic inflammatory disease, heartbreak, infertility, loneliness, cervical
1240 cancer, poverty, loss of self-esteem, loss of reputation, being used, suicide, substance
1250 abuse, melancholy, loss of faith, possessiveness, diminished ability to communicate,
1260 isolation, fewer friendships formed, rebellion against other familial standards, alienation,
1270 loss of self-mastery, distrust of complementary sex, viewing others as sex objects,
1280 difficulty with long-term commitments, various other sexually transmitted diseases,
1290 aggressions toward women, ectopic pregnancy, sexual violence, loss of a sense of
1300 responsibility toward others, loss of honesty, jealousy, depression, and death.”; and,

1310 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Maryland Student Legislature urges the United States
1320 Congress to repeal Section 510(b)(2) of the U.S. Society Security Act to prevent the use
1330 of taxpayer money to mandate misleading, ineffective abstinence-only education in
1340 public schools; and,

1350 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Maryland Student Legislature urges the Maryland General
1360 Assembly to enact legislation forbidding the use of taxpayer money to encourage the use
1370 of abstinence-only education; and,

1380 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Maryland Student Legislature urges the Maryland General
1390 Assembly and the State Superintendent of Schools to formulate a sexual education
1400 curriculum that enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of parents, teachers,
1410 students, and public health officials that is rooted in scientific evidence, providing young
1420 people with the information they need to make healthy, well-informed decisions, and that
1430 is truly comprehensive; and,

1440 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Maryland Student Legislature opposes the use of government
1450 resources to coerce public schools into using abstinence-only education.

1460 **MANDATES:** President George W. Bush
1470 Speaker of the House of Representatives Dennis Hastert
1480 House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi
1490 Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist
1500 Incoming Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid
1510 Governor Robert L. Ehrlich
1520 Speaker of the House of Delegates Michael E. Busch
1530 President of the State Senate Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, Jr.
1540 State Superintendent of Schools Nancy Grasmick

SPONSOR:

Byron E. Macfarlane, Governor of the Maryland Student Legislature